

AL-16-000-1806 -

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 6, 2015

Administrator Gina McCarthy
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

As you know, the City of Flint had, and potentially still could have, dangerous levels of lead in its drinking water. We appreciate the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) creation of the Flint Safe Drinking Water Task Force and other efforts to provide access to safe, reliable, clean water to the residents of Flint. We seek further information regarding the sustained commitment by the Task Force to work with the State of Michigan to address the long-term effects of lead exposure on Flint's children.

It is our understanding that the City of Flint, the State of Michigan, and the EPA have monitored the situation in Flint since the first report of poor water quality in 2014. However, it is clear that various opportunities to predict and prevent contamination were not taken, exposing Flint residents, and especially infants and pregnant women, to dangerously high levels of contaminants including, but not limited to, lead. This failure of government to ensure the public's safety and health must not be repeated in Flint or anywhere else. While progress is being made to improve the water quality after reconnecting to the Detroit Water System, Flint's residents and its water system are still vulnerable to short and long-term impacts.

It is critical that the local, state, and federal partners remain vigilant, and that EPA take a strong leadership role through the Flint Safe Drinking Water Task Force to prevent further contamination during the current transition to Detroit and the future transition to the permanent connection to Lake Huron source water through the Karegnondi Water Authority (KWA) pipeline. In an effort to understand the actions being taken by Task Force and address current and future challenges with Flint's water, we seek answers to the following questions:

- How often does the Flint Safe Drinking Water Task Force communicate amongst itself, and what are the communication protocols?
- How long will it take for corrosion control agents to fully create a barrier between water and the inside of the pipes?
- How are testing methods being improved to accurately measure water quality and correct testing mistakes of the past?
- How is the EPA and the Flint Safe Drinking Water Task Force interfacing with other federal agencies, such as the Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of Education, and other agencies with


respect to the future needs of the residents of Flint stemming from the long-term effects of toxic lead exposure on Flint's children from its drinking water?

- In the future, will the EPA notify residents directly if they believe the local or state government actions are inadequate to properly communicate significant risks to the public?
- The State of Michigan is responsible for ensuring compliance with federal drinking water standards. In addition, the state has elected to assume the legal responsibility for disbursing the resources it receives from EPA's Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds. How will the Task Force provide the ongoing, long-term support and oversight needed to ensure the state complies with federal standards and allocates the revolving funds in a manner that most effectively protects public health?

We encourage you to continue monitoring and supporting any and all ongoing measures by the EPA and the Task Force to test for and reduce contaminants in drinking water, prepare for the future transition to the KWA pipeline to Lake Huron, and identify and replace aging water infrastructure. Your presence in Flint will help restore the confidence in the ability of water quality regulators and begin to rebuild the trust in the effectiveness of the critical safeguards found in laws such as the Safe Drinking Water Act.

We appreciate your prompt response to these questions and invitation as well as your continued attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Gary C. Peters
U.S. Senator


Debbie Stabenow
U.S. Senator


Dan Kildee
Member of Congress

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United States Environmental Protection Agency
Regional Administrator
Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604-3590
DEC 07 2015

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
SH-702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Stabenow:

Thank you for your November 6, 2015 letter regarding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Flint Safe Drinking Water Task Force.

As a result of your letter, we have scheduled weekly calls to brief your staff on the work that the EPA Task Force is doing to provide technical assistance to the State of Michigan and the City of Flint. During those calls we have discussed the Task Force's work with the State and the City to optimize corrosion control for the Flint system, following the decision to switch to drinking water supplied by the Great Lakes Water Authority. We have also discussed the work that the Task Force is doing to help the State and City prepare for the planned switch to water supplied by the Karegnondi Water Authority in 2016. We will continue to provide weekly briefings on Task Force activities for as long as your staff finds the briefings to be useful.

Thank you again for your letter. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me or your staff may contact Denise Fortin or Ronna Beckmann, the Region 5 Congressional Liaisons, at (312) 886-3000.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S Hedman".

Susan Hedman
Regional Administrator